

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Faculty of Music

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SERIES

Thursday November 11th, 1965 at 2:00 p.m.

LE RONDEAU DE PARIS

Genevieve Noufflard, Flute Laurence Boulay, Harpsichord Marie-Hélène Panisset, Cello

Concert Hall, Edward Johnson Building

PROGRAMME

The death of Louis XIV, the Sun-King of France, in 1715 marked the virtual dissolution of artistic pomp and splendour associated with Versailles. During the ensuing Regency (1715-23) and the reign of Louis XV, court atmosphere relaxed considerably; elegance in dress, polish in manners, and sparkling wit in conversation became social ideals to be emulated by all. A turn toward the decorative and ornamental lent an air of delicate grace and charming frivolity to architecture, painting and sculpture. The visual arts of the early 18th-century belong to a stylistic period known as the Rococo - a term which is derived, significantly, from the French "rocaille" (shell-work). Rococo art is above all the art of the playful flourish. In music, the powerful, straightforward affections of Baroque style were replaced by the subtle, languishing sentiments of the "style galant". The grand polyphonic sweep of 17th-century music disintegrated into short melodic phrases covered by profuse ornamentation. The accent lay in the direction of simplicity. But not all Rococo art is superficial. While the charm of Boucher's painting and Boismortier's music may become cloying, the works of Watteau and Couperin often reveal undertones of irony and melancholy. Instead of attempting to uplift and impress, the Rococo artist seeks to entertain, please and captivate his audience.

Symphonies pour les Soupers du Roy* (unedited)
Air, Musette, Passepied

M.R. Delalande
1657-1726

Michel Delalande (De Lalande), a contemporary of Couperin, specialized in church music, while his sacred music adheres to the Baroque tradition of elaborate figural music, his instrumental works reflect the new tendencies of the "style galant". The introductory Air to his Symphonie (actually a dance suite) is not modelled on a dance form. As its title suggests, this movement exploits the melodic quality characteristic of the French "air" or song. The Musette is a dance with a rustic flavour created by a drone-like effect reminiscent of the "musette". This instrument, which belongs to the bagpipe family, has been associated since medieval times with a pastoral milieu. The French court during the Regency greatly favored the Passepied, a dance in quick triple metre. Its gay and light quality particularly suited the atmosphere at Versailles.

Sonate à trois*
Adagio, Allegro, Sarabande, Allegro assai

J.M. Leclair
1697-1764

J.M. Leclair was the foremost member of the brilliant violin school in France. His solo and trio sonatas are notable for their fusion of Italian and French styles. The sonata da chiesa, in four movements (Slow, Fast, Slow Fast), frequently included dance forms - contrary to the modern distinction between church and chamber sonatas. One need only recall the sarabande rhythm of Corelli's slow movements. While the Italians generally used dance patterns without naming them, the French mixed abstract tempo indications and dance titles.

Sonate pour violoncelle et clavecin*
Largo, Allemande, Largo, Gigue

J.B. de Boismortier
1691-1755

J.B. de Boismortier is well known for his instrumental suites called, appropriately for the age, Galanteries. His sonata for cello and harpsichord follows the four-movement structure of the church sonata.

Contrary to Leclair's trio sonata, Boismortier based his fast movements on stylized dance types: the Allemande in moderate duple and the Gigue in quick triple metre.

Sonatille pour flute et continuo*
Allegro moderato, Largo, Allegro

Michel Corrette
1709-1795

M. Corrette wrote numerous solo sonatas for flute and violin as well as a treatise on violin playing. This particular flute sonata is cast in the traditional three-movement form that originated in the Italian overture: Fast, Slow, Fast. The title, Sonatille, represents an 18th-century French equivalent to the Italian term, sonatina.

Pièces pour clavecin
La Muse plantine
Les barricades mystérieuses
Le Carillon de Cythère

François Couperin
1668-1733

François Couperin le Grand, clavecinist at Versailles, is by far the most important figure of this period. Although he composed important chamber music, he is primarily known today for his keyboard works. The four books, Pièces de clavecin (1713-30), are collections of dance suites or "ordres". Couperin often employed fanciful titles suggesting programmatic interpretation. "Suggestion" is the keyword in describing the delicate art of his aristocratic genre miniatures.

Quatrième Concert
La pantomime, L'Indiscrete, La Rameau

J. Philippe Rameau
1683-1764

Jean Philippe Rameau, learned theorist and opera composer, dominated the first half of the 18th-century. His operatic career overlapped with the meteoric rise of opera buffa style in France. Among his instrumental compositions, there is a series of clavecin suites which Rameau himself arranged for instrumental ensemble. As did Couperin, Rameau introduced titles, such as Pantomime or The Indiscreet Lady, to intimate the sentiments expressed by the music. Such works illustrate the dominant musical aesthetic of the 18th-century: music was considered a universal language that imitated "Nature" as represented by the natural physical surroundings of man and the natural passions of the human soul.

*Continuo bass: Laurence Boulay

NEXT EVENT IN THE THURSDAY AFTERNOON SERIES

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH

FACULTY OF MUSIC ENSEMBLES